

Our local television station in Portland, WGME, Channel 13, is now part of the Sinclair Broadcasting organization. After the station was acquired by Sinclair, its orientation changed. I have noticed that it airs a commentator at the end of the nightly evening news show whose opinions are invariably right-wing conservative in bent. Channel 13 has become a vehicle for the opinions of people 'from away' and can no longer be trusted for objectivity.

This is particularly disturbing as we come up on the 2004 election. Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election without an equivalent pro-Kerry piece in conjunction with that is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.